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SIPDIS

SIPDIS, SENSITIVE

STATE FOR WHA/CAR (JOE TILGHMAN)

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: JAMAICA: ELECTION CAMPAIGN ROUND-UP NO. 6

REF: KINGSTON 1288 (232000Z AUG 07)

#### Summary and Analysis

#### 1.(SBU) In this sixth round-up of election-related developments:

- The latest polls show the Opposition Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) has pulled ahead of Prime Minister (PM) Portia Simpson Miller (PSM)'s ruling People's National Party (PNP) by a few percentage points;
- In advance of the September 3 Election Day, military, police, and election worker voting completed with only minor glitches;
- Election-related violence continues, with an ominous up tick in recent days;
- The Organization of American States is on the ground to monitor voting;
- High voter turn out predicted by the media;
- Writ filed by People's National Party (PNP) against possible dual-national candidates;
- PSM criticized frequently in the media: is Portia losing her popularity?

2.(SBU) Little or no election-related violence accompanied the early voting of police, military, and election workers on August 28. However, since then there has been an ominous up tick of violence with alleged political motivations. Random incidents involving grass-roots supporters of the two parties could still escalate out of control in some areas. A popular radio talk show host has broadcast a report alleging a plot involving a major killing designed to influence the general election, to be carried out sometime before September 3. The report alleges that the PNP would have rogue police shoot one of the Party's own leading figures, and then blame the JLP for his/her assassination. A reliable JLP source subsequently told EmbOff that the Opposition had obtained confirmation of the report, but would not elaborate.  
End Summary and Analysis.

Media Roundup:  
Prime Minister's suitability for office questioned;  
JLP gains ground in opinion polls

3.(SBU) Recent media coverage of PSM indicates her popularity may be falling in public opinion and within her own party. Rumors abound that there is a growing rift in the PNP and within the Cabinet itself. Many of the PNP faithful are no longer clearly supporting the PM, and are moving in the background to secure their own futures. A Stone poll for the "Jamaica Gleaner" newspaper shows

the JLP with a 4-point lead, while a Mark Wignall survey for the "Observer" newspaper gives the JLP a 2-point lead. A Don Anderson Poll conducted for the "Observer" shows 41.3 percent of voters planning to support the PNP, with 40.3 percent planning to vote in favor of the opposition JLP (Note: this poll's margin of error is three percent, suggesting the race remains too close to call at this time. End Note.)

Pre-voting of support personnel complete, nationwide vote set for September 3

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4.(SBU) After much ridicule in the media and allegations of dissent within the PNP, PSM announced that elections would be held on September 3. Military, police and election workers voted on August 28, and turned out in large numbers. According to newspaper accounts, early voting showed a turnout rate over 70 percent. (Note: Early voting turnout is said to be a good indicator of expected turnout on Election Day; the last time such a high percentage of voters turned out, it was to vote the JLP out of power, thus ushering in the current PNP domination of parliament for 18 years. End Note.) While the early voting was not without its glitches, overall the process went very well. Some workers found their names were not listed as eligible in the precinct in which they currently resided, and some election volunteers were not listed on the rolls for early voting.

Violence limits campaign activities

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5.(SBU) After increased reports of violence, including a JLP motorcade struck by gunfire the evening of August 29, and based on a recommendation from the Electoral Commission, on August 31 Police Commissioner Lucius Thomas banned rallies and motorcades in

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Kingston, St. Andrew, and St. Catherine:

(A) On August 29, a convoy of three cars carrying the JLP candidate for Eastern St. Andrew, Dr. Aubyn Barlett, had been fired upon, with three persons reportedly wounded.

(B) The next day, JLP officials had claimed that there had been an organization of attacks against them in the last 24 hours which had claimed five lives thus far.

6.(SBU) Police and election officials apparently intend to uphold the ban on activities: both parties have cancelled large rallies which had been scheduled for Saturday, September 1, in areas of downtown Kingston (at this hour, it is unclear whether the rallies may be moved elsewhere).

7.(SBU) In recent days, other violent incidents with alleged political overtones have included:

-- Several supporters of JLP candidate Laurie Broderick on their way to a motorcade were blocked and beaten in Bunkers Hill, North Clarendon;

-- Three JLP workers were shot in separate drive-by shootings in Canterbury, North West St James on Wednesday, August 29;

-- Two JLP supporters were shot and killed at a bar in Frazer's Content, West Central St. Catherine owned by a JLP Councilor on Wednesday night;

-- Police are investigating attacks on PNP supporters near Christiana in North East Manchester, resulting in one receiving stab wounds, after the route of a motorcade was blocked;

-- In Western Hanover, JLP candidate Barrington Grey says he was accosted and threatened by his PNP opponent D.K. Duncan.

Preliminary list of possible JLP-led Cabinet

8.(U) According to a report in the August 31 "Jamaica Gleaner" newspaper, a JLP victory on September 3 will usher in a new administration led by current opposition leader, Bruce Golding, who will take charge of Defense. The report states Dr. Ken Baugh, who served as Health Minister under the Edward Seaga Administration of the 1980s, will be assigned again as Minister of Health. The portfolio of finance and public service would go to Audley Shaw; Karl Samuda would take over foreign affairs and foreign trade; Delroy Chuck will be appointed Minister of Justice, while Dorothy Lightbourne would preside over legal affairs. Further responsibilities include:

- Derrick Smith as Minister of National Security;
- Edmund Bartlett for Tourism;
- Dr Horace Chang will take on Housing and Inner City Renewal;
- Andrew Holness will be appointed Education and Sports Minister;
- Veteran politician, Pearnel Charles, will take on Transport, Public Works and disaster preparedness;
- Dr Christopher Tufton may be appointed to Information, Agriculture and Environment Minister;
- Clive Mullings will be assigned Mining, Energy and Telecommunications;
- Shirley Williams will be given a job to steer industry, commerce and investment promotion.

((Note: Samuda, Baugh, Shaw, Chuck, and Smith have served for many months as the Opposition shadow cabinet for the portfolios outlined above; their respective designations as ministers thus would come as no surprise. End Note.))

#### Dual Citizenship Flap

9.(SBU) There has been further speculation in the media regarding candidates with dual citizenship. Twenty minutes after it was scheduled to begin, the PNP cancelled a planned news conference on the topic, claiming legal counsel had advised against further public discussion of the matter. Local media reports that a writ has been filed in the court system to protest candidates having sworn allegiance to foreign powers. (Comment: No ruling is expected until well after the election, and any eventual attempts to disqualify sitting Members of Parliament probably would involve protracted

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court cases. End Comment.)

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